

are supposed to have passed a budget by April 15—tax day. We haven't even begun to mark it up.

People are attempting, politically, to explain. The Democratic spinmasters are attempting to explain what it is all about. Why are we doing these things? Why hasn't a real budget been produced? They say Republicans are divided. They say: Oh, tea party people and Republicans are all divided. The Republican House has passed a budget. Where is the Democratic Senate? Who is divided? Why can't they produce a document? Why do we have to have the Vice President and the President having meetings and the President giving speeches? Why don't we see a real budget that the American people can see in advance and be able to evaluate and Senators standing, as we are paid to do, and casting votes for or against it? That is what we need to be doing.

I don't agree with the fact that the President is leading. I wish I could say that. Maybe he will surprise us on Thursday with something. I hope so. But I don't sense any leadership at all, because the budget he produced will not do the job. That is the only one we have in the Senate at this point. Indeed, Mr. Erskine Bowles, the man the President chose to head his fiscal commission, said the President's budget came nowhere near doing what is necessary. Actually, what he said was the President's budget goes nowhere near where they will have to go to resolve our fiscal nightmare.

I am wondering what is happening. The American people get it. They sent a message in the elections last November. They sent 64 new Members to the House of Representatives, and every single one of them promised to do something about reckless spending in Washington.

What about this budget the President has submitted to us? It is the only one we have in the Senate. The Senate Democratic leadership hasn't presented one. The President's budget called for a 10.5-percent increase in education, a 9.5-percent increase in energy, a 10.5-percent in the State Department's budget, and a 62-percent increase in the transportation budget. Well, we don't have the money. Forty cents of every \$1 we spend is borrowed. That cannot be continued. We are on an unsustainable path. The American people know it. Every expert has told us. We know it. Where are our leaders in the Senate?

Senator CONRAD, apparently, made a presentation of his budget, and the Republicans have asked Senator CONRAD to present it to us 72 hours before the committee meets. He said he is not going to do that. He made a presentation to the Democratic conference and, apparently, it didn't go well. Senator CONRAD apparently proposed reducing spending more than they liked to hear. The Democratic leader, Senator REID, was sort of critical, actually. He said it was a nice bunch of charts. Obviously, he wasn't happy.

When are we going to see a budget? Are we going to go another 700 days? Are we not going to have a budget this year? The way things should work is like this: The Senate should come forward—the Democratic Senate, because they have the majority and we can pass a budget with a simple majority—and propose a budget that hopefully will get bipartisan support. If not, they stand and say what they believe in and how this budget reflects their vision for America. The House has done that. Then we go to conference committee. After it comes to the floor and is voted on, it goes to the conference committee and differences are worked out. Then it comes back and we have to vote on final passage of an agreed-upon budget.

We have to have a budget. It is time for this country to begin to reverse the reckless trend we are on because we are placing our Nation at risk. Mr. Bowles and Senator Alan Simpson, when they testified before the Budget Committee, warned us we have to do something significant. In the written statement they both signed, they said we are facing the most predictable economic crisis in our history. When asked when that could occur, Mr. Bowles said 2 years, maybe. Alan Simpson said: I think maybe 1. We are not talking about our grandchildren. I am talking about now.

What I would just say is, I think it is time for us to go back to regular order. We have tried a lot of different approaches to confront this crisis we face. It seems to me our leadership in the Senate is desperately seeking to avoid having to do what is responsible; that is, to stand and produce a budget. If they aren't prepared to stand before the American people and tell them how they think the country ought to be run and where the money ought to be spent and how much ought to be collected, then they are not leading, it seems to me.

I am very disappointed in the President's leadership. He has been roundly criticized because the only proposal he has sent to us is irresponsible. It in no way comes close, as Mr. Bowles said, to doing what is necessary to avoid our fiscal nightmare, and that is the path we are headed toward. It is not a matter of dispute. We will not reach 10, 15 years down the road spending like we are because we will have a catastrophe before then.

Alan Greenspan, the former head of the Federal Reserve, said he thought maybe some sort of compromise would be reached that would be good for the country. The only question, he said, was whether it would be before or after a debt crisis occurs. This was a few weeks ago that Alan Greenspan was saying this.

It is a challenge for us and a challenge for the leadership in this Senate to come before the American people and produce their plan and seek support on the floor of the Senate. Let's debate it. Let's have amendments offered. Let's go to conference, and some-

how, some way hammer out a budget that will put this country on a better path. We have no other choice. It is the defining moment for this Congress. We have no higher duty than to confront the dangerous fiscal path we are on.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that at 2:15 today the Senate proceed to executive session and begin consideration of Executive Calendar No. 61, the nomination of Edward Chen of California to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of California under the previous order.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. REID. Madam President, there will be 3 hours of debate on the Chen nomination beginning at 2:15 p.m. today. Senators can expect a rollcall vote on the Chen nomination at approximately 5:15 p.m. today.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Arkansas.

FLOODING AND FEMA

Mr. PRYOR. Madam President, I will speak in morning business for 10 minutes or less. Let me talk about a couple things this morning. First, I wish to talk about something my State has been going through since mid-March and has continued to the present day. We have been battered by tornadoes and high winds and now flooding. We see this in a photo that was taken a few days ago, late last week, of one of the areas in our State underwater. We have had many towns that have been evacuated, many counties have been declared disaster areas. In fact, the Corps of Engineers showed me a map on Friday when I met with them. They have a map that is a large overview that starts down near Dallas, TX, pretty much through all the State of Arkansas, then a little bit of Missouri and Tennessee and Illinois and even, I think, a little bit into Kentucky.

The folks in those areas in that oval have received six times the normal rainfall. When we have six times the normal rainfall, this is what we get. This is a photo where we can see the water is in the house and up on the front porch. These folks are underwater, similar to a lot of people in our State.

I will say this. The Governor of our State is doing all any Governor can do. He is doing a great job. Even though we have Interstate 40 underwater right now in one area where the White River goes under Interstate 40, they are trying very hard to get that open, maybe even today if the water will cooperate. We are seeing a lot of emergency response in our State, seeing neighbor helping neighbor, churches are rolling out, we have seen folks doing everything they can to make this work.

Also, I thank the Corps of Engineers. It is easy for us to beat up on the Corps